Palos Heights

Palos Heights, IL

Mayor Robert Straz

Pledge Summary

The City of Palos Heights is committing to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge for its 5th year. We have conducted a variety of actions over the years as part of our commitment including planting pollinator gardens, restoring landscapes, conducting educational programs, events and outreach. We are excited to continue this effort in 2023 to help the beleaguered Monarch butterfly with a variety of new restoration efforts and educational programs.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

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- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Robert Straz	2026	1/29/2026	
Mayor Robert Straz	2025	3/26/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Robert Straz	2024	2/28/2024	Signatories
Mayor Robert Straz	2023	2/21/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Robert Straz	2022	1/20/2022	Signatories
Mayor Robert Straz	2021	1/15/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

70000

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

450 youths, 450 adults attended Monarch celebration. Additional 150 youths attended educational programs, and 100 adults attended adult programming. The rest of the numbers are visitors using grounds, visiting nature center, and visiting social media each year. Signage and social media details our work throughout the year in regards to Monarchs.

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

.25

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

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Yards, schools

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

Engaging with low-income communities through field trips and outreach programs

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

We are the only nature center in Palos Heights, and the community looks to us to make strides in environmental projects.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

Signage would be helpful to spread the word that we are part of the Mayors Monarch Pledge. Information about the true cost of implementing usable nature and pollinator habitat would help bridge equity gaps, because some communities may think nature is "too expensive" for them to have.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

We try to not only educate the public and our visitors about nature, we also continue education for our staff and volunteers about the environment and conservation

Selected Action Items

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

700

What was the date of your festival?

9/23/22-9/25/22

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

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U of I extension, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

2 day event with timed entry to ensure everyone got a turn in our butterfly tent. Near the nature center with indoor accessibility for comfort. Volunteers and staff were well-informed and visitors got great information and had an enjoyable experience.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

N/A

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

0

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

N/A

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

N/A

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

N/A

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

N/A

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How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

N/A

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

N/A

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

0

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

N/A

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

0

What species were collected or propagated?

N/A

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

N/A

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

N/A

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Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

N/A

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

0

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

N/A

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

N/A

Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

N/A

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.

N/A

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners

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Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

Both organizations helped with garden maintenance throughout the season as well as Monarch Celebration.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

350

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

100

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

none

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

6 acres

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

Removal of buckthorn, honeysuckle and other woody invasives with hand tools and stump treatment. Pulling of sweet clover and garlic mustard. Teasel rosettes sprayed. Prescribed burns.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

10

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

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Signs placed during growing season (spring-fall) talking about different native plants and their importance, and highlighting pollinators that can be spotted in the gardens.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

Facebook, instagram, outdoor signage, newspapers, email groups

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

Liaised with Palos Heights Garden Club about milkweed and pollinator plants. They volunteered in the gardens and helped with interpretation at some events. We also gave a presentation to Cook County Farm Bureau about pollinator planting.

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

Palos Heights Library, City Hall

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

N/A

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

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